the ROHMER REVIEW

No. 9

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

During the past few months a sizeable sheaf of newspaper clippings has accumulated. Many of these concerned the argument between Los Angeles' KTLA-TV and various Asian-American groups over the showing of the film *The Brides of Fu Manchu* on television. The Japanese American Citizens League objected to the film as presenting a stereotype demeaning to Asians. They did not succeed in blocking showing of the film, but their protest did result in KTLA's providing a disclaimer announcing: "Tonight's movie is based on the mythical and literary character, Dr. Fu Manchu, created by Sax Rohmer. This feature is presented as fictional entertainment and is not intended to reflect adversely on any race, creed or national origin." Similar protests caused CBS to cancel a showing of *The Vengeance of Fu Manchu* and led ABC to cancel its re-run plans for the made-for-TV movie *Madame Sin*, starring Bette Davis. A somewhat light view of the affair was taken by Jack Smith in his column in the *Los Angeles Times*, 21 May 1972, in which he said: "Perhaps *The Brides of Fu Manchu* is a bit racist. It presents Anglo-Saxons as stereotype buffoons—dashing impetuously about, pounding up the wrong stairways, bashing in the wrong heads, getting ourselves popped in the jaw, and all the while delivering the hollowest pomposities through stiff upper lips. It makes us look like what Queen Victoria would have called horses' posteriors; but then of course we often are." (Thanks to Lianne Carlin, Randy Cox, Len and June Moffatt, Luther Norris and Chris Steinbrunner for sending clippings.)

Other clippings: an item from *Pacific Citizen* (publication of the Japanese American Citizens League) summarizing research results showing that Orientals have a lower tolerance for pain than either whites or blacks; a report from *Time* (May 1, 1972) on the surrender of a large band of dacoits to Indian police; and an Associated Press dispatch dated August 7, 1972, describing the operations of Lo Hsing Han, Burma's opium king, whose private army of at least a thousand is "composed of Dacoits, hill tribesmen, Shans, Yunnanese, Haws and deserters from the 93rd Kuomintang Division which was thrown out of China in the Communist takeover in 1949."

Chris Steinbrunner sent a clipping on the Society of American Magicians annual show in April. The writer of the column mentioned a stage magician who called himself Fu Manchu: "There were, in

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The Haunted Temple

by Sax Rohmer

I.

Luxor was crowded. Money could not obtain a room at the Winter Palace Hotel, for every room was occupied. The French representative of one of Europe's great Jewish families had secured forty apartments for the accomodation of his *dahabeeyeh* party; his English cousin had arrived twenty-four hours later and had booked thirty more for *his* party. Only as a personal favour had the great M. Pagnon granted Roy Swynnerton the use of a minute chamber, top-floor back, at the nominal sum of P.T. 90 per day.

What is a distinguished Egyptologist, a B.A. and B. Sc., member of numerous learned societies and of one of the oldest families in Britain compared with a millionaire banker who is a member of numberless companies and of one of the oldest families out of Israel? Small fry indeed.

Roy Swynnerton recognized that he was a wretched interloper, and almost regretted his own temerity. Camp life within the precincts of the Temple of Medînet Habû has many drawbacks; but, there, at least one may stand where the heaps of precious ingots once gleamed within the Treasury of Rameses in Thebes of the Hundred Gates; one may share the apartment over the great pylon with the bats and creeping things, and, by the light of the same old moon that shone upon Golden Pharaoh, watch the painted ladies of the royal harem wave *flabella* before the mighty one, cast flowers at his feet, and receive the reward of his godlike caresses.

Oft-times he had spent his evenings thus, imagining how, in some earlier incarnation, he, too, might have worn the double crown of Egypt.

Fashionable women of Europe and America moved about him tonight with black-coated manhood hovering in attendance. Swynnerton felt uncomfortable, as every Englishman, strive how he may to defy the conventionalities, must ever feel who is conscious of not being "correct."

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Dress-suits are unnecessary in the desert, and Swynnerton was arrayed in a serviceable, washable linen outfit. He concealed his discomfort, however, for in his secret heart he despised the sheeplike ways of Society equally with the gilded glory of Goldenburg, and sought to crush that within him which was allied to the ways of the fold.

He turned to his companion, who sat beside him in the gaily lighted lounge, and a slight smile disturbed the grim straight line of his mouth.

"It is good of you to consent to know me," he said in his slow, drawling fashion. "For, though I am neither distinguished nor wealthy, I dare to be shabby."

Madame de Medici dropped the cigarette from her tapered fingers into the little bowl upon the table at her side. Women there were tonight whose reputation for smartness was well deserved and who, covertly watching madame, knew her to be dressed with a daring yet exquisite tastefulness which, though they might copy, they could never equal. Women were there whom Society called beautiful, but their beauty became very ordinary prettiness beside the dazzling loveliness of Swynnerton's companion.

She wore a gown of Delhi muslin, having golden butterflies wrought upon its texture, and over it, as a cloud, floated that wondrous gauze which is known in the East as "the breath of Allah." No newest tenet of Paris was violated in its fashioning; no line of madame's exquisite shape was concealed by its softness.

She smiled dreamily, protruding one tiny foot cased in a shoe of old gold. Under her curved black lashes her eyes turned momentarily, glancing at Swynnerton. Those eyes were such as have never been bestowed by the gods upon woman save as a scourge to man. They possessed the hue seen in the eyes of a tigress, yet they could be voluptuously soft as the shadows of some dim lagoon.

Her carmine lips were curved with a high disdain, and, though her hair was black as the pillars of the Efreets' hall, her cheeks glowed like the petals of a rose and her velvet skin was fair as the almond blossom.

"You lack the courage of the Grand Duke J——," she murmured, her tones silvern as those of an astral bell.

Swynnerton turned languidly in his chair.

"You refer to the eccentric royal personage who braves the fashion of Alexandria arrayed in a frock-coat fastened by a piece of string, a pair of canvas shoes and a straw hat with a crown which permits the genial rays to caress his scalp?"

Madame de Medici laughed softly.

"But he is so clever an artist," she said.

"There you are," he drawled; "an artist and a grand duke: all is forgiven!"

Madame laughed again, adjusting the filmy gauze which caressed her white shoulders, light as the amorous cloud which of old enveloped Io the beauteous.

"You are so English," she declared, "so absurdly sensitive. You fly to the Winter Palace because you are weary of the Theban solitude, and here you find yourself more lonely than in the wilderness."

"But you took pity upon me," said Swynnerton, leaning towards her, "and now wild horses could not drag me back to my camp."

"Ah!" sighed Madame, archly lowering the fringe of black lashes, "so you are not so English that you cannot make love!"

"On the contrary," he replied, "I am so completely English that I cannot help it!"

She rose slowly to her feet; her moving robe diffused a faint perfume. For a moment Swynnerton feared that he had offended her. Then:

"Come, my *cavalleria rusticana*," she said; "walk with me beside the holy Nile, and tell me I am beautiful in that deep Northern voice which has such tender notes. With what sweet English maids have you rehearsed the ballad of love, my friend? For you strike its chords with such rare proficiency."

II.

Roy Swynnerton was conscious of a certain exultation as he came out from the Winter Palace, past the bench upon which were seated the picturesque dragomans, and so on into the shadowed part of the street which intervened between the hotel entrance and the arcade of shops.

Beside him glided the most beautiful and elegant woman of all that gay gathering. An old *roué*, whose name may be found in Debrett, bowed to Madame in mid-Victorian fashion and eyed unkindly her cavalier. Count Ivan Sergovitch, said to be the handsomest man in Europe, who had been haunting the foyer for an hour past, bit savagely at his moustache and turned brusquely to re-enter the hotel. Quite a company of young cosmopolitan bloods followed, with longing eyes, the exquisite figure in the amazing cloak of flamingo feather red; and a substantial New York business magnate (whose wife was in Cairo) quitted his strategic post near the dragomans' bench, hitherto held against all comers, with manifest reluctance.

Mystery is women's highest charm. It is the mystery of dark eyes peeping from a *mashrabeeyeh* lattice that constitutes the love lure of the East. Madame de Medici was utterly mysterious; taunting, unfathomable; at once a Sibyl and a Cleopatra.

Who was she, and from whence did she come? She was steeped in mysticism, spoke intimately of the strange writings of Eliphas Lévi, and quoted Pythagoras and Zarathustra with the same facility wherewith Swynnerton quoted Kipling. She had tremendous intellectual fascination, and made him feel as a child at one moment; in the next the wondrous eyes would look into his own, and they were the luresome eyes of a *ghâzeeyeh*, setting his blood more quickly coursing.

Groups of tourists hovered around the native shops, volubly chattering of their travels. Boatmen and donkey-boys sat upon the low parapet watching the idle throng with their inscrutable Egyptian smiles. In the river lay the lighted *dahabeeyehs*, and from one of them—that of Mr. Goldenburg—came the softened tones of a sweet violin.

"Art lays its treasures at the feet of Mammon," murmured Madame.

For a moment she paused, resting her slim, ungloved hand upon Swynnerton's arm. The strains of a Spanish caprice of Sarasate's, played by the world's greatest living violinist, floated across the waters of the Nile.

It was Luxor in "the season"—the focus of wealth and fashion and art; Luxor, that once was Thebes, the City of Amen, the City of Temples and Palaces; and all about them, in the velvet night, lay the deathless mystery of that old, mysterious land.

Swynnerton looked long and ardently at his companion as she moved onward again. Only *she* had a true place in that picture of the greater city which now was rising up before him. The modern empty Luxor was fading, and upon either bank of the ancient river, uprising shadowly, were the stately walls of the City of a Hundred Gates. He seemed to be pacing beside the Nile with a Pharaoh's queen on a night of long, long ago.

"Tell me about your work in the temple," she said, breaking an eloquent silence. "You are seeking the sacred ornaments of the Princess Taia, are you not?"

"Yes," answered Swynnerton dreamily. "Under the floor of what is sometimes called the treasure room."

"You know that the Frenchman, de Lisle, is engaged in a similar task at Bibân-el-Mulûk?"

"He is wrong," snapped Swynnerton with sudden animation; for the enthusiast within him was awakened by the challenge in the words. "He confuses the Princess with the Queen, whereas they belonged to different families. Both were famed for certain"—he hesitated—"for certain studies; but that is merely coincidence."

"You refer to the fact that Princess Taia was a sorceress?"

Swynnerton started, glancing aside at his lovely companion; then he laughed shortly.

"You seem to know everything," he declared; "your astonishing knowledge of the recondite ceases to surprise me. Yes, the Princess was famous for her beauty and notorious for her witchcraft."

"Beware, then, that you are not playing with fire," said Madame de Medici softly.

Swynnerton pulled up. They had passed the shops, and passed the imitation temple gateway which marks the boundary of a hotel garden. They were alone with the night mystery of the Nile upon that narrow footpath which leads to the old *shadûf*.

Something sombre, a new fascination, had come into the silvern voice. The moon poured its radiance coldly upon the flaming figure of this strange woman who warned him to beware of a sorceress dead twelve hundred years or so before the dawn of Christianity.

Madame de Medici's tigress eyes looked fully into his own, and now their glance chilled him coldly as but a moment gone their glance had warmed him like wine.

"You speak in riddles," he said awkwardly, again become the boy who questions the Sibyl.

"Have you, then, heard and seen nothing strange in the enchanted place?" she whispered, and looked about her fearfully.

"I have seen nothing," he replied, "but heard much. Some of the Arabs in these parts regard the whole temple as haunted, I am aware; but then, if one listened to natives one could not avoid the conclusion that the whole of Egypt is haunted! My head man and several others come from Suefee, in the Fayûm, and are of different mettle."

"And do they camp within the temple?"

"Well," admitted Swynnerton, "not exactly. They sleep in the village, as a matter of fact—or have been doing so for some little time past."

"And you sleep in Luxor?"

He stared fully into the lovely, sombre face.

"You don't seriously believe that I am *afraid* to sleep in the temple?" he inquired slowly.

"Not at all; but I think you are wise to avoid doing so."

A while longer he watched her, betwixt anger and perplexity, until her carmine lips softened, parted, and hinted the gleam of pearly teeth. She drooped her heavy lashes, then raised them again; and the wonderful eyes were changed. They chilled no longer. Madame de Medici raised one slim, round, ivory arm and laid her jewelled fingers caressingly upon Swynnerton's breast—the flaming cloak fell back, revealing cloudy muslin disarrayed and one peeping shoulder wooed by the daring moon.

"How I love the English character!" she whispered, lending the words a bewitching little foreign intonation. "Ah, my friend, you are so perfectly English. Look!"—she moved her hand from his breast and pointed out across the moon-bathed Nile—"there is my *dahabeeyeh*."

Swynnerton stared out across the water towards where a vessel, showing but few lights, lay moored in the stream.

"Your *dahabeeyeh*?" he said in surprise. "But I thought—"

"That I was one of the Goldenburg party?" suggested Madame. "Oh, no! I have my own *dahabeeyeh*; and because I, too, was lonely I came, as you came, to the Winter Palace."

"I am grateful to the gods of Egypt," said Swynnerton in a low voice.

Madame turned and pressed her hand upon his breast again. He clasped his own tightly over the little jewelled fingers, pressing

them against his heart, which was beating wildly, tumultuously.

Across the waters of the river of romance came the sound of a throbbing *darabûkeh* and the wail of a reed pipe, faintly, magically; that ancient music which the ages have not changed and which accompanied the gliding of Cleopatra's golden barge down mystic Nile to meet the Roman.

A man's voice, a light baritone, possessing in a marked degree the wild yearning note peculiar to Oriental vocalists, rose upon the night's silence. The song was a ghazal of that sweet-voiced singer of Old Shîrâz called Chagarlab——"the sugar-lipped":

"Kih ishk âsân nemoûd
Ahwèl welee ûftâd ..."

Transfixed by something compelling, magnetic, in the vibrant tones, Swynnerton stood tightly clasping Madame's jewelled fingers, the final syllable of the verse dying away to ever diminishing beats of the *darabûkeh* and a softly sustained wailing note of the reed.

"You have Persians among your crew?" he said, and drew his lovely companion closer to him.

"But why?" she whispered, looking up into his eyes. "Do you recognise the words of Hâfiz?"

"Perfectly. May I translate?"

"If you wish." Her reply was barely audible.

Swynnerton stooped and kissed her upon the lips.

III.

"Alee Mahmoud, you are mad!" said Swynnerton angrily.

Against the violet afterglow rose the majestic ruins of Medînet Habû, softened and enriched to a semblance of their ancient splendour. Swynnerton stood at the entrance to his tent, confronting the tall Egyptian who alone shared with him the haunted solitude.

"With my own eyes I have seen her," declared the man solemnly, "a *ginee* in the form of a Pharaoh woman. From out yonder she came——"

"What do you mean by 'out yonder'?" snapped Swynnerton, his curiosity for the moment overcoming his anger.

"From the river——slowly——slowly——to the great gate of the temple."

"Some belated tourist in all probability. Alee Mahmoud, you are a Coptic fool!"

But, despite the deadly innuendo, Alee Mahmoud, a devout Moslem, persisted composedly that the rising of the moon brought a female demon, a ghoul in the form of a "Pharaoh woman," to the ruined temple.

"You had been drinking!" pursued Swynnerton, hoping by dint of cumulative insult to provoke an outburst and get at the truth.

Alee remained unprovoked. Others had seen the apparition; including the temple *ghafir*, all the village knew of it; no man whom God had not afflicted with idiocy would willingly remain after nightfall in a haunted place.

Swynnerton drummed his heel upon the ground irritably. His common sense told him that the growing panic among the native workmen was due entirely to the nature of the pictures upon the walls of the subterranean passage which he had discovered below one of the priestly apartments of the temple. The inscriptions referred indisputably to magical practices of a novel kind; they confirmed his theory, maintained against de Lisle and others, that the ritual jewels and magical implements of the once notorious sorceress whose name is nearly always found defaced in Egyptian writings lay somewhere at the end of the passage.

That day he had actually cleared the debris from before a door, wrought of the red sandstone of Silsilis, which almost certainly was the portal of the secret treasure-room. Despite the superstitious character of the natives, the spot was altogether too near to Luxor for the excavation to be left unguarded. Some predatory agent of a thieving dealer or ambitious rival (for it has been said that "there is no honour among excavators"), armed with pick and shovel, might filch the treasure-trove destined to establish definitely the reputation of Roy Swynnerton, B.A., B.Sc.

Now, Alee Mahmoud refused to remain... and Madame de Medici was waiting in the perfumed cabin of the *dahabeeyeh*, where the incense-burner sent up its smoke pencils of ambergris; and her golden eyes would be soft as the eyes of the gazelles... .

But whomsoever would retain the mastery of Moslems must first learn to retain the mastery of himself. Once let the idea that a place is haunted take root in the Arab mind, and short of employing shackles nothing could persuade a native to remain in that spot after sunset. Thus, at Karnak, is the Bâb-el-Abid, or "Gate of the Slave," a supposed secret apartment in the Temple of Mentu, said to be watched over by a gigantic efreet. No Egyptian would willingly remain alone in the vicinity of that gate by night.

Swynnerton, therefore, who knew his man, crushed down the wrath that seethed and bubbled within him.

"You will take a letter for me to the *dahabeeyeh*, *Nitocris*," he snapped. "Wait here until I call you."

He entered the tent, trimmed and lighted the lamp, and wrote a note excusing himself and explaining his reasons. Sâdee, the Persian poet, sings that love can conquer all; but Sâdee lacked the opportunity of meeting a British archaeologist. Though every *houri* of Mohammed's paradise had beckoned him, Roy Swynnerton would not have left the treasure of Taia unguarded.

Clapping his hands, a signal which Alee Mahmoud promptly answered, he handed the letter to the tall Egyptian.

"Give this personally to Madame de Medici," he said, "then go to the devil. I shall be spending the night in the temple."

The man saluted him gravely and departed, his slippered feet making no noise upon the sandy ground; like a shadow he glided from the tent door and was gone. Swynnerton stood looking after him and thinking of many things. The fires of his anger were by no means extinct; but the night would pass, and the morrow held golden promise.

A faint, cool breeze fanned his brow, and about him lay that great peace which comes to Egypt with the touch of night. Vague sounds proceeded for a time from the direction of the Arab village, and once a pariah dog set up his dismal howling upon a mound not twenty yards away.

Swynnerton could see him, painted in violet shadows against the sand, and, picking up a stone, he hurled it well and truly. With it went the last vapours of his anger. The beautiful silence became complete.

For long he stood there, smoking his pipe and watching eager, velvet darkness claiming the land, until the perfect night of Egypt ruled the Thebaïd and the heavens opened their million windows that the angels might look upon the picture below.

Half-regretfully he turned to enter the tent, when——

"Roy! ... Roy!" came remotely and sweetly——a woman's voice calling his name.

He stopped short, one hand upholding the tent-flap, and felt his heart leap in his breast. The voice had seemed to come from the westward and beyond the temple. He stepped out into the ebon patch of shadow that, like a carpet, lay before his canvas portal.

"Who's there?" he cried.

None answered. A bat circled erratically overhead, then swooped and was gone into some cranny of the great pylon.

"Roy! ... Roy!"

Again it came, more intimately, that sweet, uncanny crying of his name.

"Roy! ... Roy!"

Making for the moon-white angle of the great ruin, Swynnerton set out at a rapid pace. The woman, whoever she was, must be approaching by the path which skirted the temple——approaching from the valley below el-Kûrn, the Valley of the Queens.

He had almost gained the corner, wherefrom he could command a clear view of the path, when suddenly he pulled up. The icy finger of superstition touched him.

Who, or what, could be coming from the tombs of the queens at that hour of the night?——from the tombs of the queens... .

Breathing checked, muscles tensed, he stood listening. No footfall disturbed the solitude; the breeze of the early evening was past; the very insects were still.

Deliberately, and putting forth a conscious effort, he took the six remaining paces to the corner of the temple enclosure. No living thing was visible. A brief, horrific tingling crept all over his skin and into his scalp. The grey wings of the Unknown stretched over him, and he stood in the shadow of fear.

"Is anyone there?" he cried, and shrank from the sound of his own voice, for it had a sinister and unfamiliar ring. The voice of the Thebaïd answered him, the voice of the silence where altars were, of the valley where queens lie buried.

Panic threatened him, but he grimly attacked the ghostly menace and conquered. His natural courage returning, he paced slowly forward along the silvery road that stretched to the gorge in the mountain. He stopped. Something lay at his feet: a great bloom of a kind entirely unfamiliar to him.

He bent and picked it up. It was an orchid, of a strange and unnatural green colour, marked with blood-like splashes. He knew that no such flower grew in Egypt. It possessed a most delicious perfume... .

"My God!" he cried aloud. "What is the matter with me? What does it all mean?"

The moon-bathed landscape was swimming around him; a deadly nausea asserted itself. He had never swooned in his life, but he knew that he was about to do so now... .

* * * * * * * * * * * *

He was aroused by the sound of pattering feet——of quickly running feet. His head was throbbing feverishly, but he rose from his knees and looked in the direction whence the sound proceeded. Of the duration of his swoon he was enabled to judge from the position of the moon. It floated now behind the palm grove which marked the Arab village, and the great trunks stood up like pillars of ebony against the silver glory.

Two Arabs——one of them, a halt man, lagging behind his companion——came racing up the sandy slope from Medînet Habû, their eyes starting from their skulls, their sobbing breath telling of the horror that drove them on.

They passed within a few yards of Swynnerton, yet saw hom not. Heedless of all things save their urgent fear, they raced by over the slope and were lost from view in the dip beyond. A memory flashed, electrically, in Swynnerton's mind. He had seen the men before; they were from Comte Raymond de Lisle's camp at Bibân-el-Mulûk!

He managed to get upon his feet, and he went staggering down the path to the temple. Dense shadow draped its courts and gateways... and a vague, reflected light, changing from vaporous blue to spirituous yellow, danced, elfinesque, upon the mighty columns looming over the sactuary!

It rose... it fell; it rose... it fell; it wavered. A pencil of smoke was drawing a phantom line straightly upward through the still air... .

"This is delirium!" faintly whispered Swynnerton.

He suddenly grasped the key to the whole mystery. He had become infected with some pestilence; the disease had gotten a firm hold during sleep, and this——all this fantasy of siren

voices, of green blossoms, of flying Arabs and witch lights——was delirium. He must exert every ampère of will that remained to him and make for Luxor——for the riverside... .

Beyond doubt he was delirious. He had crossed the first and second courts and now stood in the entrance to the sanctuary of the temple. Not five paces from him a wondrous figure raised snowy arms above a tripod supporting a golden bowl. The edge of the bowl was figured with the Ancient Egyptian zodiacal signs, and within it burnt a fire that cast up perfumed smoke.

Draped in a simple robe, but wearing the ritual jewels, the head-dress, necklace of lapis lazuli, and pectoral ablaze with many gems, a lovely sorceress invoked the black gods of Amenti!

"Taia!" muttered Swynnerton hoarsely. "The Princess Taia!"

Slowly the figure turned. Alluring white arms were held out to him... and from beneath the magical head-dress the tigress eyes of Madame de Medici beaconed!...

"Roy! Come to me——I am calling you!" stole rapturously to his ears.

He leapt forward, staggered, fell; clutched at the robe of the maddening sorceress... *and woke.*

The false dawn was dying——the true dawn opening a new day. Clutching the tent-flap with both hands, he lay looking out at rosy morn tinting the rugged lines of Medînet Habû. He sprang to his feet, uttered a hoarse cry, and went running madly through the mighty courts of the temple.

His excavation below the floor of the sanctuary had been completed during the night; it opened, as he had conjectured, into a small square chamber... which was empty.

IV.

Raymond de Lisle watched the stately approach of the white camel along the valley of Bibân-el-Mulûk. M. le Comte Raymond de Lisle, the wealthiest amateur Egyptologist in Europe, preserved the manners and, in a modified degree, the costume of a Parisian dandy, even in the desert. As he stood there in the blazing noon-day sun, spruce, valet-groomed, he was correctly representative of one school of archaeology as Roy Swynnerton, working barefoot with his Arabs at Medînet Habû, was representative of another.

The white camel, with many a snarl, knelt. Assisted by two black-robed, red-slippered attendants, Madame de Medici descended from the saddle of red and gold. Of her long and fatiguing ride from the Nile she exhibited no trace; her costume was not creased, her black hair, beneath the wide-brimmed sun-hat, was not disordered. It would seem that she possessed the toilet secrets of Diane de Poictiers and the love-lore of Thäis.

De Lisle's brown eyes flamed with admiration. He clasped the little white-gloved hand and led his beautiful visitor into the spacious tent, where a repast was laid that had not disgraced the Guildhall.

Attended by four waiters from the Winter Palace, they lunched and spoke of many things; but always M. le Comte's brown eyes spoke of passion. Yet, when at last they were alone, with coffee such as can be tasted only in the East and cigarettes of a sort that never leave Egypt except to go to Petrograd——

"Quick! Tell me!" he whispered, and glanced furtively around him. "What occurred last night at Medînet Habû?"

"How should I know what occurred, monsieur?"

Languidly Madame de Medici swept her black lashes upward, languidly lowered them again, veiling the amber eyes.

"Ah!" de Lisle laughed, "but we understand one another; we are old allies, are we not? I dispatched that limping fool, Abdûl, with Hassan-es-Sûk, to the temple as arranged, and neither has returned since! But, through the medium of Said——Abdûl's brother——they sent me a mad story——a lying, absurd story."

"So?" murmured Madame, dropping her half-consumed cigarette into the little brass tray.

De Lisle glanced at her uneasily, but proceeded:

"They found no ornaments, but lost their picks and shovels! Ha! ha! If I was wrong regarding the resting-place of the ritual jewels, so was M. Swynnerton, it appears! Again we start level! But, madame, those poor frightened fellows tell a tale of a 'Pharaoh woman' who appeared to them just as they effected an entrance to the subterranean chamber."

"So?" murmured Madame again, and delicately lighted a fresh cigarette. "Who knows, eh? Those Arabs are sometimes clairvoyant."

M. de Lisle bent forward, resting his manicured hands upon his knees. The courtier within him——for a courtier dwells within every Frenchman——had detected a coldness in the attitude of madame the beautiful. She was changed——subtly, but unmistakeably. Always she was difficult, but today she was aloof.

"Listen," he said, and sued the glance of the tigress eyes, but was foiled by lashes imperiously drooped. "May I remind you that we are allies? A thousand pounds is a sum that even you, my goddess of disdain, would not lightly reject. So, at least, it seemed to me when I explained to you that the jewels of Princess Taia must be found, not by M. Swynnerton, but by *me*."

"You had learnt then, monsieur," interrupted Madame rapidly, "that your own theory was the wrong one, and you feared that the theory of M. Roy Swynnerton was the right."

"I solicited your aid. You have"——a certain nervousness became perceptible in his manner——"arts, strange trickeries... ."

"Call them impostures, monsieur!" she said sweetly, and flicked ash into the brass bowl.

"I do not call them impostures," he retorted coldly, "because they are beyond my comprehension, and therefore outside my judgment. That you employed those powers I do not doubt. The camp at Medînet Habû was deserted last night. How you wrought upon the fears of the natives I know not, nor do I ask; but tell me, I beg, how you seduced M. Swynnerton, the rugged, from his vigilance.

Was it the perfume of those green flowers of madness that you caused him to inhale? Or did you lure him to your *dahabeeyeh* and steal his will from him by hypnotic arts?"

Madame de Medici rose queenly to her feet and swept the speaker with a glance of high disdain.

"Perhaps, M. le Comte," she said, "your Abdûl and your Hassan are liars and thieves, or perhaps I learnt that a poor dying shred of soul yet survives within me. Perhaps I relented—even at the eleventh hour. The luncheon was above criticism. My camel is waiting, monsieur."

* * * * * * * * * * * *

In the long, low cabin of the *dahabeeyeh*, *Nitocris*, Madame de Medici reclined upon the *deewân*, its mattress gay with many silken colours. Her flawless figure was draped wondrously in a robe conceived in Deccan gauzes; a cloud of delicate green caressed the pure modelling of her form, and shimmered alluringly as through the phantom haze of a Fayûm sunset, quickened to greater tenderness by an ultimate veil like the blush in the heart of a tulip. Keats' Lamia was not more magically lovely. The long, amber eyes were soft as enchanted lagoons; the shadow of the curved lashes rested upon flower-fresh cheeks.

Silver incense-burners filled the air with the sensuous perfume of ambergris.

Roy Swynnerton entered, peering eagerly into the shadows cast by the dim mosque lanterns swung from the ceiling. A golden bowl, wrought about with Ancient Egyptian astronomical subjects, stood upon a tripod in the centre of the apartment. Beside it, heaped upon the carpet of Damascus looming, lay ornaments richly chased and inlaid with strange gems.

"The ritual jewels!" he whispered. "The treasure of Princess Taia!"

From the deck above to that perfumed cabin below stole the sound of a softly beaten *darabûkeh* and the mournful sweetness of a reed pipe. The tender-voiced singer of ghazals began, so softly that the music seemed, indeed, a ravishing sigh, to render the love-plaint of Hâfiz:

"Kih ishk âsân nemoûd... ."

BIBLIOGRAPHICA ROHMERIANA

by R. E. Briney

10.30 Folkestone Express

Derek Adley and W. O. G. Lofts have turned up evidence of a hitherto unknown Sax Rohmer book. The few details so far known are simply stated:

10.30 FOLKESTONE EXPRESS Lloyd's Home Library #41 (ca. 1916).

Lloyd's Home Library was a series of threepenny paperbacks issued by Lloyd's Newspapers Ltd., London. A companion series was called Lloyd's Girl's Home Library, and it was a publisher's advertisement in one of these volumes, recently found in a London bookstore, which revealed the existence of the Sax Rohmer title. This particular volume is missing from the British Museum's file of the Lloyd's Novels, so it has not been possible to examine an actual copy of the book. And thereby hangs a puzzle.

"The Ten-Thirty Folkestone Express" was a short story by Sax Rohmer, published in *Lippincott's Magazine* for December 1914. (The same story had appeared the previous month in *The Story-Teller* in England under the title "The Crouching Man.") But present opinion is unanimous in affirming that the Lloyd's paperbacks were invariably book-length novels of at least 40,000 words. Did Sax Rohmer expand his short story for paperback publication? Or was this Lloyd's volume an exception to the general rule, consisting possibly of a collection of stories, one of which provided the volume's title? And in any case, how did the book come to be ignored in all previous lists of Sax Rohmer's works, including the lists compiled by the author himself?

Rewritten Stories

A fact not generally known is that many of Sax Rohmer's early short stories exist in more than one version. Sometimes the difference is between versions published in Britain and in the U.S.; in other cases, between those published in magazine and in hardcover. In the former instances, one reason for the re-writing may have been financial. Rohmer was, after all, making his living by writing, and it is a fact that first publication rights have always paid more than reprint rights. The extent of the disparity in payment is illustrated by an anecdote told by Quentin Reynolds in his book *The Fiction Factory* (Random House, 1955). In 1918 Edgar Wallace's agents submitted a story, "Stamped in Gold," to

Detective Story Magazine, with an asking price of $500. Henry Ralston, of Street and Smith, replied that while he would gladly pay $500 and more for original material, he would offer only $350 for this story, since it had already been sold to a British magazine.

Sometimes the rewriting involved little more than changing proper names and background details. Thus, in compiling the collection *Tales of Chinatown*, Rohmer took two of his magazine stories with Egyptian and Indian backgrounds and converted them into "tales of Chinatown." "The Hand of the White Sheikh" (*Cassell's Magazine*, December 1920)——also published as "The Mystery of the Shrivelled Hand" (*Munsey's Magazine*, February 1922)——became "The Hand of the Mandarin Quong." In the process, Cairo was changed to Singapore and the white sheikh of Tanta with his talismanic silver ring became the Mandarin Quong with his gold-encased finger-nail. In similar fashion "The Red Eye of Vishnu" (*The Story-Teller*, January 1916) became "The Key of the Temple of Heaven," with the little brown man from the hills above Kathmandu transformed into the little yellow man from Pekin.

The same treatment converted "The Man with the Shaven Skull" (*Tales of Chinatown*) into "Skull Face" (*Salute to Bazarada and Other Stories*) and "The Green Scarab" into "The Stolen Peach Stone." "Scarab" was written in 1943, but not sold at that time; it was converted into "Peach Stone," a Bernard De Treville story, and published in *This Week*, 19 November 1944; and finally the original version was published in the June 1966 *Edgar Wallace Mystery Magazine*.

Some stories underwent more extensive revisions. Mention has already been made in this column (TRR #7) of the episodes of *Brood of the Witch Queen* rewritten for publication in the American slick magazine *Mystery*. The story "The Haunting of Low Fennel" (*The Story-Teller*, November 1915) underwent a drastic sea-change to become "Nightmare House!" in *Mystery*, August 1932. The plot was revamped, characters and their motivations changed, and the supernatural element greatly enhanced. The rewritten version is in every way an improvement over the original.

The same can be said of "The Treasure of Taia" (*Munsey's Magazine*, February 1926). In its original version, this was "The Haunted Temple" (reprinted elsewhere in this issue of TRR). In the rewritten story, aside from the Persian quotations being rendered into English (a not very illuminating change), motivations were again changed, some obscure details clarified, and additional fantastic episodes added.

"Nightmare House!" and "The Treasure of Taia" are two of the many Sax Rohmer stories currently buried in back-files of magazines and deserving of revival. And with the current resurgence of interest in Sax Rohmer's works in England, a new collection of stories is not entirely beyond the realm of possibility. We can only wait and see what develops. ●

武滿洲

FU MAN CHU

by Cay Van Ash

For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with Far Eastern languages, some comments on the Devil Doctor's name may be in order. Scholars have remarked that, as a Chinese name, "Fu Manchu" is inadmissible. True! But this was not his name nor, ethnologically speaking, was he Chinese.

"Manchu" is not a surname but the name of a people, originally known as the Jurchen, who first appeared in north-eastern Manchuria. The Chinese, based in what is now Peking, regarded them as both foreigners and barbarians. Nevertheless, the Manchu ultimately invaded China proper, furnished the emperors of the last (Ch'ing) dynasty, 1644-1912, and occupied about half of the key government positions. The Manchu had their own separate culture and language—the latter written with an alphabet derived from Syria—which they maintained throughout this long period; they did not become fully assimilated with the Chinese people until the beginning of the present century.

There are many Chinese characters which are read "Fu". But the one used by Dr. Fu Manchu appears clearly as a decoration (on the doors, wasn't it?) in the Boris Karloff film *The Mask of Fu Manchu*. In Japanese (which bears roughly the same relationship to Chinese as written English does to Latin) this same character is read *takeru*, and means "valiant". After the semi-legendary Prince Yamato had slain a particularly formidable brigand, the term was conferred upon him as a distinction, and he was thereafter known as "Yamato Takeru".

Consequently, "Fu Manchu" means simply "the valiant Manchu". In Chinese the "Fu" would have been written last, but the order would be reversed in an English text.

Sir Denis Nayland Smith would much have liked to know what the Doctor's real name was, and spent long years trying to find out. "Fu Manchu" was merely a soubriquet. But perhaps I should not say "was"—for who can doubt that he still lives? ●

51. Herne Hill
S.E. 24

Dear Looker-On—

Thanks for your paragraph about the "Dope" work, but actually it was on the stocks long before the Carleton Case brought the matter so prominently before the public. The increasing drug habit has had my attention for some time past & knowing of the link existing between certain purveyors frequenting the night clubs & the resorts—& Limehouse, I saw an opportunity for a dramatic & strong contrasted novel. Some of my inquiries have brought to light very odd facts respecting this traffic, the increase in which I ascribe to the spirit restrictions.

All good wishes

& very sincerely yours

Sax Rohmer.

Jan 22. 1919.

LETTER FROM SAX ROHMER TO *LONDON OPINION*, 22 JANUARY 1919

51. Herne Hill

S.E. 24

Dear Looker-On -

Thanks for your paragraph about the "Dope" book, but actually it was on the stocks long before the Carleton case brought the matter so prominently before the public. The increasing drug habit has had my attention for some time past & knowing of the link existing between certain purveyors frequenting the night clubs & like resorts - & Limehouse, I saw an opportunity for a dramatic & strongly contrasted novel. Some further inquiries have brought to light very odd facts respecting this traffic, the increase in which I ascribe to the spirit restrictions.

All good wishes

Very truly yours

Sax Rohmer

Jan·22·1919

THE WELL OF ZEM-ZEM

A Note by Robert Galbreath

In *Master of Villainy* there is a reference (page 291) to "the Well of Zem-zem" which Sax Rohmer once mentioned in a story for exotic effect. Readers may be interested in additional information.

According to Fawn M. Brodie, *The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton* (N.Y.: Norton, 1967), page 100, the sacred well of Zemzem, at or near Mecca, is said to be the same well from which Hagar drew water for her son Ishmael, son of Abraham, legendary father of the Arab people.

Looking into Sir Richard F. Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (2 vol., Memorial Edition, 1893; reprinted by Dover Publications, 1964), we find that a Zemzem is the generic name for a well within a mosque. Further:

> An important Zemzem is the sacred well at the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid Al-Nabawi) at Al-Madinah, in which Mohammed's tomb is located. The Zemzem is called "the Apostle's Well" (Bir al-Nabi); its water is considered holy, and thought by some to flow directly from the Prophet's grave (or rather from a vein of water springing up directly beneath the grave) and by others to be connected by underground passage to the Zemzem at Meccah. (I,338)

> *The* Zemzem, however, is the one at Meccah. Its unending supply of water is considered miraculous; its water is used only for drinking and for religious ablution, nothing else; it is heavy, brackish, salt-bitter, apt to cause diarrhoea and boils. Pilgrims at Meccah are advised to break their fast with it. Bottled and shipped elsewhere, it is used to break lenten fasts; applied to the eyes, it is said to brighten vision; the dying imbibe a few drops to thwart Satan; in distant countries it is believed to facilitate the pronunciation of Arabic. (II,162-4)

THE DOCTOR'S BLADE

(an interview from *The New Yorker*, 29 Nov 1947)

To date, we haven't heard of any other plan for stopping wars quite as simple as the one outlined to us at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel the other day by Sax Rohmer, the creator of that sinister, puissant, and altogether terrifying Oriental, Dr. Fu Manchu. Mr. Rohmer, whose health continues excellent in the face of persistent reports that he's been dead for years, is small, gray, nervous, affable, and shy about revealing his age, which he vaguely describes as "fiftyish." His scheme for ensuring peace is the sort of thing that could best be carried out by his own Dr. Fu Manchu, but even an Occidental, he assured us, could see it through successfully. "Just a matter of quietly and efficiently eliminating any boat-rocking blighters trying to imitate Hitler and Mussolini," he said. "It costs fourteen million dollars a day to wage a large-scale war, which is generally provoked by twenty or thirty men. If a peace-loving government were to put up an amount equal to the expense of one week's hostilities to back an organization dedicated to killing the lads that want to fight, you could stop the business before it got properly started. You wouldn't need too big an organization. Just a small, secret, capable group, who'd do their work with poison, guns, gas, or what have you. Ought to make it worth the operatives' while. Give them, say, half a million each for every completed mission. The idea is highly practical, but when I suggested it before the first World War, I was called a bloody hooligan and a cheap assassin. Nice way to greet a good suggestion, I must say." Mr. Rohmer began to look fretful, and we diverted him to the subject of Dr. Fu Manchu. The Doctor, he told us, has changed considerably since he turned up in 1940 as President Fu Manchu, the first Chinese Chief Executive of the United States. "He's still villainous and unscrupulous," Mr. Rohmer said, "but he's flat out against Communism and trying to help democracy. In the old days, you know, he was all for personal power." The new, high-minded Fu Manchu will soon appear in a magazine serial, and also in a play that Mr. Rohmer has just finished. The author would like to have Basil Rathbone play the Doctor, since he feels that Mr. Rathbone is appropriately tall, cold, and suave, and masterful even in pajamas.

Dr. Fu Manchu, we discovered from Mr. Rohmer, came into being as a consequence of the fact that Mr. R. once rented an office in Limehouse to write in. "I'd done my stint on Fleet Street, you know," he said, "and was trying a spot of free-lancing. Matter of fact, that's when I took this name, Sax Rohmer. In ancient Saxon,

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'sax' means 'blade;' 'rohmer' equals 'roamer.' I substituted an 'h' for the 'a' as a gesture in the direction of phonetics—pretty obscure gesture, I guess. My real name's Arthur Sarsfield Warde, and though I was born in Birmingham, my people were all Irish. Father was an engineer, and it was his profession that took us to England. My mother's family were from Athlone and were friends of T. P. O'Connor, the famous Irish editor, who opened the way for me in journalism. It's hard to say now whether I walked or was thrown out of Fleet Street, but at any rate I left the business after writing stories——damned literary ones——for *Pearson's* and *Chambers' Journal*, of Edinburgh. It was all bread, cheese, onions, and no cash for a while after that——this was all around 1911——until Newman Flower, who is Sir Newman today, bought a serial I had knocking about in the trunk, called 'The Sins of Severac Bablon,' for a new periodical, *Cassell's Magazine*. It was a kind of Robin Hood tale, with a rich Jew doing a poor Jew in the eye until the tables were neatly turned. From the Jews, I went on to the Chinese and Dr. Fu Manchu, but between times I wrote a hell of a lot of comic songs for George Robey, the comedian."

"Let's hear one," we suggested.

"Hard to remember now," said Mr. Rohmer. "Hold on, though, I think I've got one." In a jagged baritone, he sang, "'Of monarchs who e'en have merry been, the something I have reckoned. For never was seen a king or a queen so potty as Charlie the Second.' ...Now, wait a minute.... 'Wenches and wine'——no.... Ah, yes——'The something is fine in wenches or wine, whatever their age or shade is, and none can surpass our play with the glass or out-tickle us with the ladies.'" Mr. Rohmer beamed and had just announced "Refrain" when a handsome blond lady broke in upon us. "My wife," said Mr. Rohmer.

"Used to do a turn myself in variety," said Mrs. Rohmer. "Got a long way from that since I married Sax. Remember that tomb in Egypt, dear?"

"Odd thing, that," said Mr. Rohmer. "I'm rather fond of climbing into excavations, you know, and a friend of mine, Rex Engelbach, who's a museum curator in Cairo, thought it would be a nice treat if Betty, here, were to be the first woman to enter a tomb he'd just opened. Entrance was only four feet across, and the tunnel wasn't high enough for anybody not lying on his belly. Tore the dress right off the poor girl."

"Lord," said Mrs. Rohmer, "that *was* something!"

"Also interested in hieroglyphics and cryptology," said Mr. Rohmer.

"Ever been to Chinatown?" we enquired.

"Been to Chinatown here, there, and everywhere," said Mr. Rohmer. "Back when you had Prohibition, the *Herald Tribune* arranged to have me taken around your Chinatown with a squad of police. My God, what a night! We broke in on more harmless Chinamen than I thought there were on earth, and got to roistering so much that the reporter

who was with me missed his deadline. None of the Chinatowns nowadays are any more sinister than Bloomsbury. Right in the midst of Limehouse today, they've carved a great arterial road, and Penny Fields, the Doctor's old stamping ground, has practically disappeared. The way things are going, with big roads and housing plans, it's getting damned hard for anybody to do any mysterious stuff."

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Editor's Notes

Except for minor changes in punctuation and paragraphing, the preceding interview has been reproduced exactly as it originally appeared. In common with the majority of articles about Sax Rohmer, it has its share of inaccuracies and misleading statements—many of them due to Rohmer's own penchant for mystification. For example, at the time that Rohmer described his age as "fiftyish", he was in fact less than ten weeks short of his sixty-fifth birthday. Those who have read *Master of Villainy* (which is itself by no means free of inaccuracies) should have no trouble spotting other departures from fact.

Rohmer's "stint on Fleet Street" occurred *circa* 1903; his earliest known published story appeared in January 1904, and it was destined to be almost eight years before Newman Flower bought *The Sins of Séverac Bablon*. The name "Sax Rohmer" was certainly adopted earlier than 1911; its earliest known appearance in print is on a song called "The Camels' Parade" which was published in 1910, and it may well have been used even before then. Rohmer's description of the invention of the name, having achieved the dignity of print in *The New Yorker*, was duly inserted into the manuscript of *Master of Villainy* by its meddling editor. However, Cay Van Ash has subsequently said that he is sure this explanation was "a deliberate fantasy, dreamed up after the suppression of [Sax's] German editions in 1936. For the sake of publicity, he then revealed his original name in the British newspapers, saying that the Nazis thought 'Sax Rohmer' to be a Jew. He did not really believe this. He thought that the real motive had been merely to prevent the outgoing of revenue from the Third Reich. No one really knows the truth, but I doubt this explanation because I think the Germans would simply have pirated his work, as the Japanese publishers were already doing. The destruction of the printing plates seems senselessly vicious, which leads me to feel that Elizabeth's adventure with the sinister Dr. Schacht, even though more sensational, may be closer to the facts." [For the latter reference, see page 184 in *Master of Villainy*.]

Rohmer once explained the origin of his name to Van Ash as the application of a general recipe for the invention of pseudonyms: the name should be unusual enough to attract attention, simple enough to be easily remembered, and short enough to fit

comfortably on the spine of a book... .

Cassell's Magazine was hardly a "new periodical" in 1911. It had been in existence since 1867, but between 1906 and 1912 its circulation had suffered a sharp decline, partly due to competition from *The London Magazine* and other periodicals. In March 1912, W. Newman Flower, who had been editing a companion magazine called *The Story-Teller* (where Chesterton's Father Brown stories first appeared), took over as editor of *Cassell's Magazine*. Almost at once there was a marked improvement in quality and in circulation. For the next ten years the magazine was highly successful, and Rohmer's fiction appeared frequently in its pages and in those of the other Cassell fiction magazines. [An excellent account of these magazines can be found in *The House of Cassell* by Simon Nowell-Smith (Cassell, 1958). Additional details are given in Sir Newman Flower's autobiography *Just As It Happened* (N.Y.: Morrow, 1950). Sax Rohmer is not mentioned in either book.]

The Irishman Thomas Power O'Connor, known as "Tay Pay"—— reporter, newspaper editor, founder of at least two successful papers, literary critic, Member of Parliament for Galway——was a major figure in British journalism for many years. An excellent account of his career is contained in *Sixty Years of Fleet Street* by Hamilton Fyfe (London: W. H. Allen, 1949). Additional information and a photograph are to be found in H. Simonis' *The Street of Ink* (Cassell, 1917).

Reginald L. ("Rex") Engelbach (1880-1946) was a British engineer and archaeologist, a pupil of William Matthew Flinders Petrie. Engelbach served as Petrie's assistant on many of the latter's excavations in Egypt, and co-authored the book *Ancient Egyptian Masonry* (Oxford University Press, 1930) with Somers Clarke. Later in life he served for many years as Keeper of the Cairo Museum.

The Rohmers' adventure into the Egyptian "tomb" occurred on their belated honeymoon in Egypt in 1913. (See Chapter 12 of *Master of Villainy*.) The site was the famous "step-pyramid" at Meydûm; far from being a newly-opened tomb, this pyramid had been fully excavated by Flinders Petrie in 1891. Interested readers can find a description of this pyramid, complete with color photograph and cross-sectional drawing (showing the passage down which the Rohmers crawled into the interior) in an excellent book, *The Pyramids of Egypt* by I. E. S. Edwards (Viking Press, 1972). More complete diagrams, together with a wealth of fact and conjecture, are contained in *Secrets of the Great Pyramid* by Peter Tompkins (Harper & Row, 1971). Both books are highly recommended.

A description of the Limehouse area today, together with a few regretful backward glances to the hey-days of the Devil Doctor, is contained in an article called "Little Thrills of Horror in E.14" by Tom Pocock, published in the London *Evening Standard* for July 8, 1972. Many familiar landmarks from the Fu Manchu tales are mentioned in this article. [Thanks to Bill Lofts for bringing this to my attention.]

——R. E. Briney

FILM NOTES

by W. O. G. Lofts

Nigel Green (1924-1972)

Nigel Green, the British character actor who played the part of Nayland Smith with such distinction in *The Face of Fu Manchu* (1965), was found dead at his home in Brighton in the early part of May. A bottle of sleeping tablets was beside him; he was only 48 years old.

Curiously enough, I had met him on the London Underground only a month previous to his death, when he was seated next to me. He was probably on his way to the main terminus at Victoria to catch a train home. I caught his eye, and asked, "Are you still looking for the Devil Doctor?" He laughed, and seemed pleased at being recognized. He was tall

He was tall, well built, ruddy complexioned, with a military bearing that led to his being type-cast in Army officer/secret agent/detective roles. In my opinion, he was grossly underestimated as an actor. Among his many films are *Jason and the Argonauts*, *Zulu*, *The Skull*, *Let's Kill Uncle*, *Tobruk*, and *The Kremlin Letter*. His performance as General Wolseley in *Khartoum* and his roles in *The Ipcress File* and *Play Dirty* (both co-starring Michael Caine) were especially memorable, and showed what a fine actor he could be when the material was right.

The Castle of Fu Manchu

When the local cinema, The Classic, in Praed Street, advertised that *The Castle of Fu Manchu* would be shown starting on July 24th, I made a special note to see it. It was to be accompanied by *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* (based on Bram Stoker's novel *The Jewel of Seven Stars*), which was an extra incentive. However, when I arrived at the theatre I found a large crowd outside, and learned that the film had not turned up. It had got lost in transit, and had to be replaced by Dennis Wheatley's *The Devil Rides Out*. Since I had already seen this, I returned home in disappointment. However, the film did eventually arrive, and I was able to see it the following Saturday.

It began with a crash of cymbals: Sax Rohmer's *The Castle of Fu Manchu*, filmed on location in Istanbul and Spain in 1968, written and directed by Harry Alan Towers, and starring Christopher Lee (as usual) as Fu Manchu and Richard Greene as Nayland Smith. Greene was very disappointing in the role. Years ago he was known for his dark good looks, and is remembered as a dashing Robin Hood in 165 T.V. episodes. But in this film he was thick-set, paunchy, and tired looking, with none of the acting skill or incisive mannerisms

which Nigel Green brought to the same role in the first film of the series. And Tsai Chin, who once again played Fu Manchu's daughter, looked quite haggard, far from the beauty we had seen in the earlier films.

The opening scene, shown before the titles, had Fu Manchu discovering that he could turn the sea into ice. An ocean liner was sunk by one of his artificial ice-bergs, and this was excellently photographed. Unfortunately, none of the rest of the film lived up to the beginning. The synchronization was bad, and the film was very jumpy, as if numerous cuts had been made. Cheapness and carelessness showed in many ways. In one scene, two coffins supposedly containing the drugged bodies of a Professor and his girl assistant were obviously empty, judging by the way they were handles by their bearers. Some of Fu Manchu's minions were, in facial appearance and dress, clearly members of a Japanese military society; as such, they would hardly have been members of Fu Manchu's entourage.

The gang who helped Fu Manchu capture the titular castle were led by an extraordinary female dressed in man's clothing, complete with trilby hat. The gang was rewarded in typical Devil Doctor fashion — by being exterminated — while the man/woman was chained in a dungeon.

Although the film was moderately entertaining, it was filled with extremely stilted dialogue, and apart from Christopher Lee's performance the acting was uniformly dreadful. The castle was, as usual, blown up at the end of the film, but Fu Manchu's tall figure remained in the final scene, obviously threatening to return once again to match his wits against the world. But it has been four years since *Castle* was completed, and Harry Alan Towers has in the interim had some troubles with the English police. One may legitimately doubt that the series will be continued.

The current series of Fu Manchu films, written by Harry Alan Towers under his pen-name of Peter Welbeck, has starred Christopher Lee as Fu Manchu, Tsai Chin as Fu Manchu's daughter, Howard Marion-Crawford as Dr. Petrie, and Nigel Green, Douglas Wilmer (twice) and Richard Greene (twice) as Nayland Smith. It has consisted of five features:

(continued inside back cover)

A SIXTH SENSE

by Elizabeth Sax Rohmer

Some people seem to be born with a sixth sense. One can choose to develop it or to stifle it. Both Sax and I possessed such an extra faculty. Sax developed his at a very early age, while I deliberately suppressed mine, feeling that it was abnormal.

When my sister and I were children, we discussed marriage as little girls playing grown-ups often do, and I told her: "I shall marry an author." When I met Sax I did not know that he was an author. Although he had published a story at the early age of twenty, it was quite a long time afterward that I found out about it. He was very reticent, and he disappeared at intervals, leaving me to guess whether I should ever see or hear from him again. He never made a date. Every meeting we had in the early days was accidental—or so he thought. As a matter of fact, I haunted every place I thought he might be! The first I knew of his being a writer was when I picked up a magazine in a railway station and saw his name on the contents page. All the mystery of him was cleared up in my mind from that time on. I understood him, and expected nothing from him such as the average man can give a woman. And I was right. Sax never remembered a Christmas, an anniversary, or a birthday. This had its advantages, for it helped him not to remember my age!

The sixth sense, in my case, takes a sort of prophetic form. Several times in my life I have told different people of events that were about to happen to them, without being able to explain how I knew.

One instance took place during World War I. A daily maid, the same Ada who had been at our wedding and whom we had known for many years, came to work for us while her husband was away. She had not seen him for three years, and was so unhappy and frightened about losing him. On this particular day I found her weeping terribly. I suddenly said: "Ada, it's all right. Tom will be with you any time now. He's on his way home!" "Oh! Madam," she answered through her sobs, "it is kind of you... But I don't think so; I would have heard." I repeated my assurance, and then thought no more about it. And that very evening, she walked in on his arm!

On another occasion, I was in a beauty parlor having my hair done and noticed that the girl serving me was in deep distress. Tears were coursing down her cheeks. I asked her what was wrong, and she told me of a lovers' quarrel which had happened two years back; she had never seen or heard from her lover since that time, but had not ceased loving him.

"Well," I said, "you can dry your tears, for you are about to see him. And you are going to marry him!"

She was more sophisticated than Ada. She brushed her tears

away and smiled. "After all this time?" she asked unbelievingly. I repeated my statement, and just at that moment someone stopped in the doorway to tell the girl she was wanted on the telephone.

She returned pale and trembling, stared at me in amazement, and said, "Madam... it... it was him." And still I knew, and told her: "He's going to be waiting outside for you tonight, Alice. He's going to ask you to marry him." And it happened just that way.

Sax had a theory about these sudden prophetic inspirations. On each occasion the people I spoke to were in deep distress and their minds were closed to anything except their grief. The party who was trying to contact them mentally, in other words, thinking of them strongly in anticipation of a meeting, was "tuned out." But I was attuned to both through sympathy, and acted as a medium. It is known that some people have a telepathic faculty. Sax and I were sometimes able to achieve thought transference over long distances. Perhaps one day the scientists will put their skill to developing the spirit more than physics, and all this will be understood.

The two girls were very hurt when I would not tell their fortunes or those of their friends. They would not believe me when I said that I could not tell fortunes or anything else. I pointed out that I could be very rich if I *knew* how it was done. How easy then to pick all the winners!

This reminds me of an incident which took place one winter when Sax and I were visiting my brother William C. Knox in Florida. At Hialeah race track, I won on five races out of seven. My brother was keenly interested in my method of picking the winners. "It's easy," I told him. "I just pick on the colour green—either the jockey's name, or a green jacket, or green in the name of the horse." Next day he was off to the races alone. He returned in disgust. "Your system is rotten! I put everything on green, but it didn't come up once." "Well, of course not," I replied. "It's the wrong colour. It was *blue* today."

A REVIEW by Marvin Lachman

MASTER OF VILLAINY: A Biography of Sax Rohmer by Cay Van Ash and Elizabeth Sax Rohmer. Edited, with Foreword, Notes and Bibliography by Robert E. Briney. Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972. ix + 312 pages, plus 13 pages of photographs. Front cover by Terry Fowler; back cover and jacket flap drawing by Mike Vosburg. $10.00 hardbound, $4.00 paperback.

There is a special fascination to many mystery fans in reading biographical material on the people who create their favorite form of entertainment. No exception to this rule is Sax Rohmer, who is as interesting to read about as his fiction was to read. The subject of this biography certainly led an interesting life, with his varied careers before writing became his profession. Even thereafter, his insistence on authentic backgrounds led him into many adventures. He wandered London's Limehouse district for many months until he discovered the prototype of the master criminal who would emerge as Dr. Fu Manchu. Rohmer wrote especially well when he wrote of Egypt, because he was interested in that land and knew it first-hand. A high spot of this biography is the wonderfully claustrophobia-producing account of the Rohmers' exploration of the Pyramid of Meydûm while they were on their belated honeymoon in Egypt.

Sax Rohmer's character emerges with great clarity. He was intelligent, versatile (he painted and wrote lyrics and music), and a true eccentric. Though extremely sophisticated he was, nonetheless, a dupe when it came to matters of money and contracts.

The authors' approach is anecdotal, rather than that of formal biographers. That is not surprising, considering that they were protege and wife, respectively, of the subject. If occasionally hero-worshipful, they nonetheless strive (successfully) to present a balanced picture of the man to whom they were so close. I'll admit to suspecting that a few of the episodes recounted here are apocryphal, but I can't prove this. Whether they are fact or fiction, they are interesting and told in a compelling narrative style. Robert Briney, who is not unknown to the readers of this publication, edited and annotated the book and provided a foreword and a complete bibliography of the books and series characters created by Rohmer.

Sax and Elizabeth Rohmer shared a half century of life together. Theirs is perhaps one of the more interesting love stories of this century. At times their courtship and marriage seem like a pilot film for a situation comedy about a daffy young couple. Ultimately, theirs was to be a relationship which would transcend many problems, including bouts of infidelity on the part of Sax. (In fact, these peccadillos are given so much space in the book that one wonders if a more appropriate pseudonym for its hero

might not have been Sex Roamer.)

Biographies of mystery writers are few and far between. It is a pleasure to report that the present one is well worth reading —and well worth looking at, for it is illustrated with many hitherto-unpublished photographs of the Rohmers.

A REVIEW by R. E. Briney

THE OCCULT: STUDIES AND EVALUATIONS, edited by Robert Galbreath. Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972. 1-126 pages. Paperbound. $1.50. Cover by Terry Fowler.

The extent of popular interest in the occult can be judged from the circulation figures of such magazines as *Fate* and *Psychic*, from the success of Doubleday's occult-oriented Universe Book Club, or simply from a glance at the paperback rack in the nearest drug store or supermarket. A fact not often realized by either believers or scoffers is that the occult——a term encompassing such varied areas as Theosophy, witchcraft, spiritualism, parapsychology, and others——is taken seriously as an object of study by historians, sociologists, and scholars of religion and literature. The scholarly approach to the subject is nowhere better exemplified than in *The Occult: Studies and Evaluations*. The editor, a specialist in European intellectual history, formerly taught at Bowling Green University, and is now associated with the Institute for Twentieth Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin——Milwaukee. He has provided a perceptive introduction, "The Occult Today," and a lengthy annotated bibliographical guide, "The History of Modern Occultism." Among the other contributions are "Psi: Past, Present, Future" by David Techter, "Esoteric Religion and Racism in the Thought of Houston Stewart Chamberlain" by Donald E. Thomas, Jr. (Chamberlain was one of the chief forerunners of Nazi ideology), and "Benjamin Lee Whorf: Transcendental Linguist" by Peter C. Rollins (which includes a fascinating discussion of Whorf's unpublished novel *The Ruler of the Universe*). There is also Russell M. Goldfarb's "Madame Blavatsky," an excellent brief account of the founder of Theosophy.

All of the nine essays are readable and informative, and they exemplify many of the possible approaches——historical, sociological, literary, bibliographical——to the study of occultism.

This booklet was also published as the "In Depth" section of the Winter 1971 issue of the *Journal of Popular Culture*.

Also recommended, from Bowling Green:

KURT VONNEGUT: FANTASIST OF FIRE AND ICE by David H. Goldsmith ($1.00 paperback).

In April 1972 the first U.S. edition of Sax Rohmer's *Salute to Bazarada and Other Stories* was published by Bookfinger. The format is the same as that of the earlier Bookfinger editions, all of which are still available: *The Sins of Séverac Bablon*, *The Exploits of Captain O'Hagan*, and *The Orchard of Tears*. And as with the earlier books, the publisher if offering *Salute* to TRR subscribers at the special price of $4.50.

[Address: Bookfinger/Box 487, Peter Stuyvesant Station/New York, N.Y. 10009.]

The firm of Tom Stacey Ltd. will publish the British edition of *Master of Villainy* in the spring of 1973. In its extensive series of reprints, Stacey has released Sax Rohmer's *Brood of the Witch Queen*, *The Yellow Claw* and *The Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu*. *The Devil Doctor*, *The Si-Fan Mysteries* and other Rohmer titles are planned for future publication. The reprint series, whose volumes are priced at £1.80 each, has also included such fantasy and mystery titles as *The Ancient Allan* and *Morning Star* by H. Rider Haggard, *The King of Elfland's Daughter* by Lord Dunsany, *King— of the Khyber Rifles* by Talbot Mundy, *Red Threads* and *Crime on Her Hands (The Hand in the Glove)* by Rex Stout, *Uncle Abner* by Melville Davisson Post, and some of the best mysteries by John Dickson Carr/Carter Dickson and Clayton Rawson.

[Address: Tom Stacey Ltd./28-29 Maiden Lane/London WC2E 7JP/England.]

The Bowling Green University Popular Press continues to publish items of interest to mystery readers. The latest is the U.S. edition of *The Saint and Leslie Charteris* by W. O. G. Lofts and Derek J. Adley ($4.00 hardcover, $2.00 paperback). Preliminary advertising for the book gave its page-count as 161 pages, longer than the British edition, which raised the hope that it might contain extra material not included in the original edition. Alas, this was not the case. Except for a new cover and the addition of a frontispiece photograph of Charteris, the Bowling Green volume is identical with its British counterpart.

Also available from Bowling Green are the first two titles in their Popular Writers Series of pamphlets: *Philo Vance: The Life and Times of S. S. Van Dine*, edited by Jon Tuska ($1.50), and *Kurt Vonnegut: Fantasist of Fire and Ice* by David H. Goldsmith ($1.00).

[Address: Bowling Green University Popular Press/University Hall/Bowling Green University/Bowling Green, Ohio 43403.]

(continued from Inside Front Cover)

fact, three generations of Fu Manchus. I saw the last of the breed in Havana years ago. One of his stunts was to have the theater go dark, convince you that the place was full of spiders, and then sprinkle the audience with popcorn. It would make your flesh crawl. Olsen and Johnson must have seen Fu somewhere, because they used the stunt in *Hellzapoppin*."

Robert Galbreath reports the existence of a new biography, *George Robey* by Peter Coates (London: Cassell & Co., £3.25). The *Times Literary Supplement* calls it "a very readable account of a theatrical phenomenon and a complex personality." Some of the connections between Robey and Sax Rohmer were explored in TRR #8.

Anyone interested in the Fu Manchu films——not only the recent series, but earlier ones as well——will want to have issue #22 of *Photon*, a magazine devoted to fantasy and science fiction on the screen. This issue contains a long article, "Fu Manchu on Film" by John E. Parnum, together with a detailed filmography. The article is illustrated with no less than twenty-six photographs! The magazine is available at $1.00 per copy from the editor/publisher, Mark Frank, 801 Avenue "C", Brooklyn, New York 11218. Treatment of mail orders is not rapid; you may have to wait six or eight weeks to receive the magazine, but it is worth the wait.

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The photograph at right shows radio actor John C. Daly in costume as Fu Manchu, in a publicity pose for the CBS radio serial which began in 1932.

The photograph was supplied by TRR subscriber Jack Buck. Mr. Buck is a dealer in tape recordings of old radio shows. Included in his extensive stock are the first 40 chapters of the serial "Shadow of Fu Manchu." These are available on cassette, four chapters to each cassette. If interested, write:

Radio Memories
71 McKinley Avenue
Dumont, New Jersey 07628.

Letters to Limehouse

From MRS. ELIZABETH SAX ROHMER, Sussex, England:

A note on Sax's song-writing period: In those very early days I was busy keeping Sax and his father and myself alive on very little money, cooking and cleaning and getting Sax out of bed when he had been working all night. I wasn't too interested in what he was writing, so long as we sold it! I remember submitting twelve comic songs to a newspaper called *The Sunday Dispatch.* These terrible songs (with music by the author) were first turned down by various concert artists in those days, and so were quite useless. But I had what I thought was a brain-wave. We had sold one or two songs previously to the paper (and incidentally, I was the culprit who helped to pick the tunes out on a piano—— a red-nosed drunken musician we knew made the arrangements for five shillings each). I said, "Why don't we send in this bunch of twelve wash-outs and see if the editor will buy them at half price?" (The price was originally £1/10/- each.) Sax as usual was not interested in business deals, and he just laughed and said, "He won't buy them." However, I sent them. They all came back on the mat! But I really did think that the editor was mad not to grasp this opportunity, so I sent them all back again with a letter pointing out that nobody who bothered to play those songs in newspapers knew anything about music, and he could be saving himself twelve weeks of bother. To Sax's amazement a cheque came back two days later for the lot. I think I bought a turkey for dinner!

From CAY VAN ASH, Tokyo, Japan:

I was very pleased to learn from your editorial notes in the *Review* that a script for *Secret Egypt* has been found—though as a former stage manager, I blush to confess that the Lord Chamberlain's Office never occurred to me. Mr. Lofts' article suggests that the play was every bit as bad as Sax himself said it was. The odd thing is that the press notices I have seen were friendly, and even enthusiastic.

Mr. Wenden's article, relating Fu Manchu's name to Chinese coins, is amusing—but I'm afraid he has the wrong "Fu". This reminds me that in *Master of Villainy* I allowed to go unchallenged the statement that it is an impossible name. I did so, thinking that this accurately represented Sax's practice of creating names "in character" without reference to precedent. Perhaps additional comments should have been added, since there is a very good case for "Fu Manchu." I am sending you a short piece on the subject.

One of my more artistic friends kindly contributed the characters, as I am a very poor hand with a writing brush.

In "Letters to Limehouse" Mr. Frank Eck wonders whether an incendiary war chemical popularly known as "Fu Gas" may have been named after Fu Manchu. If this is the case, it may not be the first time. Fliers during World War II were plagued by luminous UFOs which they called "Foo Fighters." The origin of this term is disputed.

The ancient advertisement from the *Penny Pictorial* showing Sax Rohmer preparing to "shoot the cataract" on the Upper Nile was a justifiable bit of publicity at the time. In fact, however, Sax and Elizabeth did not get up as far as the First Cataract during their initial trip to Egypt. And one does not shoot the rapids in a sailing boat!

I find it a most excellent thing that a publication such as *The Rohmer Review* should exist. It is very neatly turned out, and the photographs from *The Eye of Siva* reproduced surprisingly well.

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Sax Rohmer in Wartime

From *A Bonfire of Leaves* by David Whitelaw (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937), page 120:

Sax Rohmer looked upon the war as somewhat of a joke and much more of a nuisance. Informing the authorities that he was an author, writer of lyrics, and a student of Egyptology, he was at once, to his amazement, drafted into the Veterinary Corps, and from this somewhat curious beginning life became for Sax entirely incomprehensible. Perhaps fortunately for him, he was very quickly laid on the shelf, and spent many months in hospital blue. And here he had but one grumble. Before the war, Rohmer had been engaged mostly in the composing of songs for Little Tich, George Robey and many other famous comedians, and he was *persona grata* in every dressing-room in London. The theatre had been part and parcel of his life and there was hardly a manager or actor whom he did not hail as a personal friend. He told me that he was treated very well in hospital, but he had one grouch: well-meaning old ladies *would* drag him out and take him to the pit at Daly's.

[David Whitelaw was a well-known writer and editor. During the 1920s he edited *The London Magazine* and *The Premier Magazine*, which published many stories by Sax Rohmer. Whitelaw also bought and published most of the stories which Elizabeth Sax Rohmer wrote under her pen-name of Lisbeth Knox.]

(continued from page 24)

1965 *The Face of Fu Manchu* [Brit. *The Mask of Fu Manchu*]
1966 *The Brides of Fu Manchu*
1967 *The Vengeance of Fu Manchu*
1969 *Kiss and Kill* [also known as *The Blood of Fu Manchu, Fu Manchu and the Kiss of Death*, and *Against All Odds*]
1972 *The Castle of Fu Manchu* [also titled *Assignment: Istanbul*].

In addition, Towers made one film using the character of Sumuru: *The Million Eyes of Sumuru* (1967), starring Shirley Eaton as the title villain and George Nader and Frankie Avalon as secret-service agents opposing her.

[For a source of more information on the Fu Manchu films, see this issue's "Notes from the Editor." — Ed.]

A Fellow-Author's View of Sax Rohmer

From *Seas of Memory* by Captain Frank H. Shaw (London: Oldbourne, 1958), page 164:

Robert Sommerville, an ex-editor of the Cassell firm, had branched out on his own account as a literary agent; and [Sax] Rohmer was one of 'Sommy's' most valued — and valuable — clients. Meeting him meant a lush dinner at Scott's. Sax Rohmer was a tall, gaunt mystic. With only a little make-up by a film-studio expert, he would easily have passed for Dr. Fu Manchu in person. He didn't behave at all like a man whom quick fame had overtaken: if anything, he was half-abashed by his increasing popularity, and kept mum about his work, except when he and I got into a huddle about our knowledge of the swarming, fantastic, unbelievable chaos that was the China of that period. It was a land of incredible possibilities, especially in so far as startling surprises were concerned. [. . .] My own experience in China may have given Rohmer ideas for further activities of his famous creation; I hope they did. He deserved any such assistance as it was possible for a man to offer, as he could convert the commonplace into the magical, and quite lacked cocksureness; in many ways he was like A. S. M. Hutchinson, than whom, perhaps, a more modest literary giant never lived.

[Captain Frank H. Shaw was a prolific contributor to *Chums*, *The Story-Teller*, *Collier's*, *The Smart Set*, and other British and American fiction magazines. His autobiography *Seas of Memory* contains reminiscences of many famous literary figures, from H. G. Wells to Conan Doyle. It is a charming and enjoyable book.]

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Back issue #8 is still available; all earlier issues are out of print.

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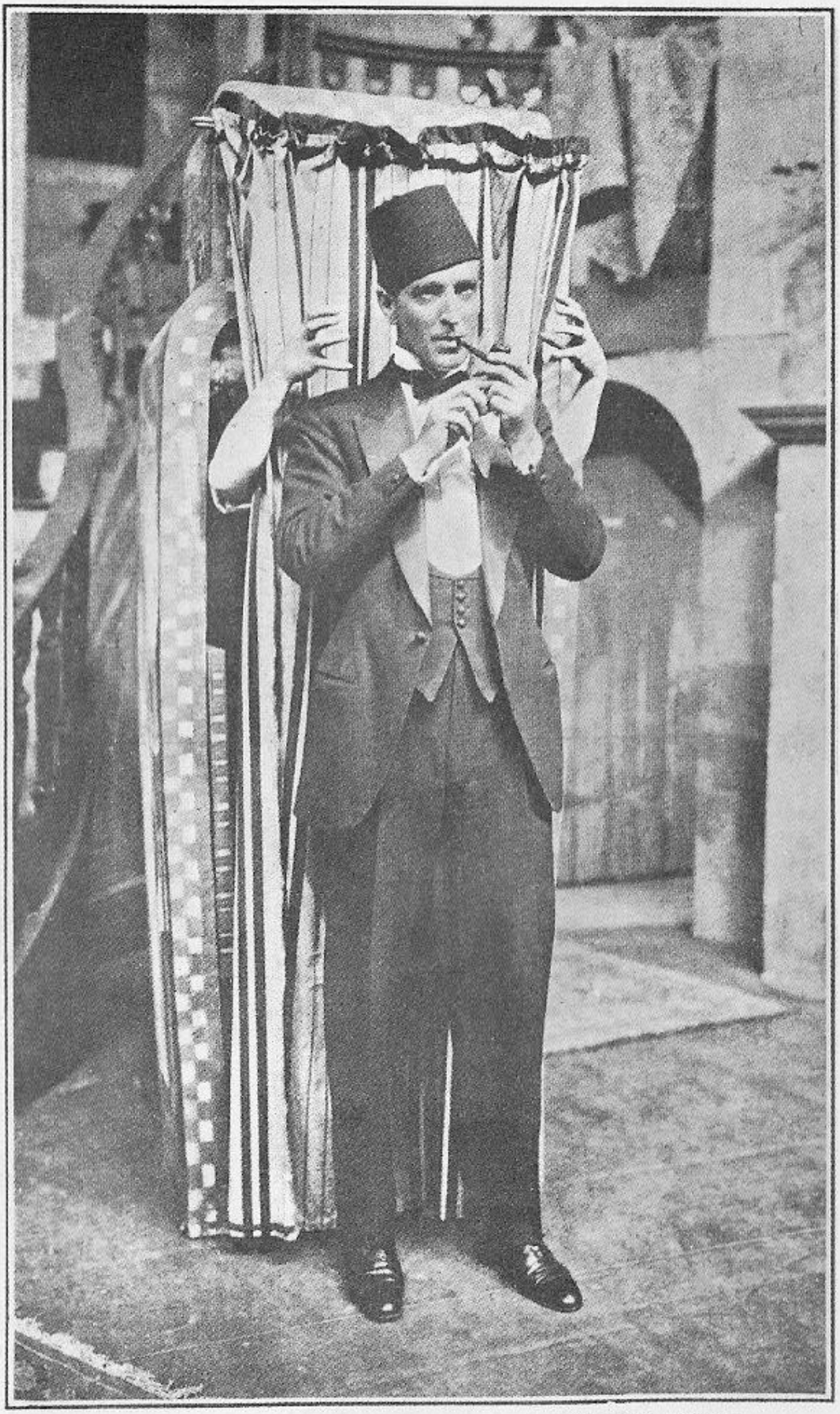


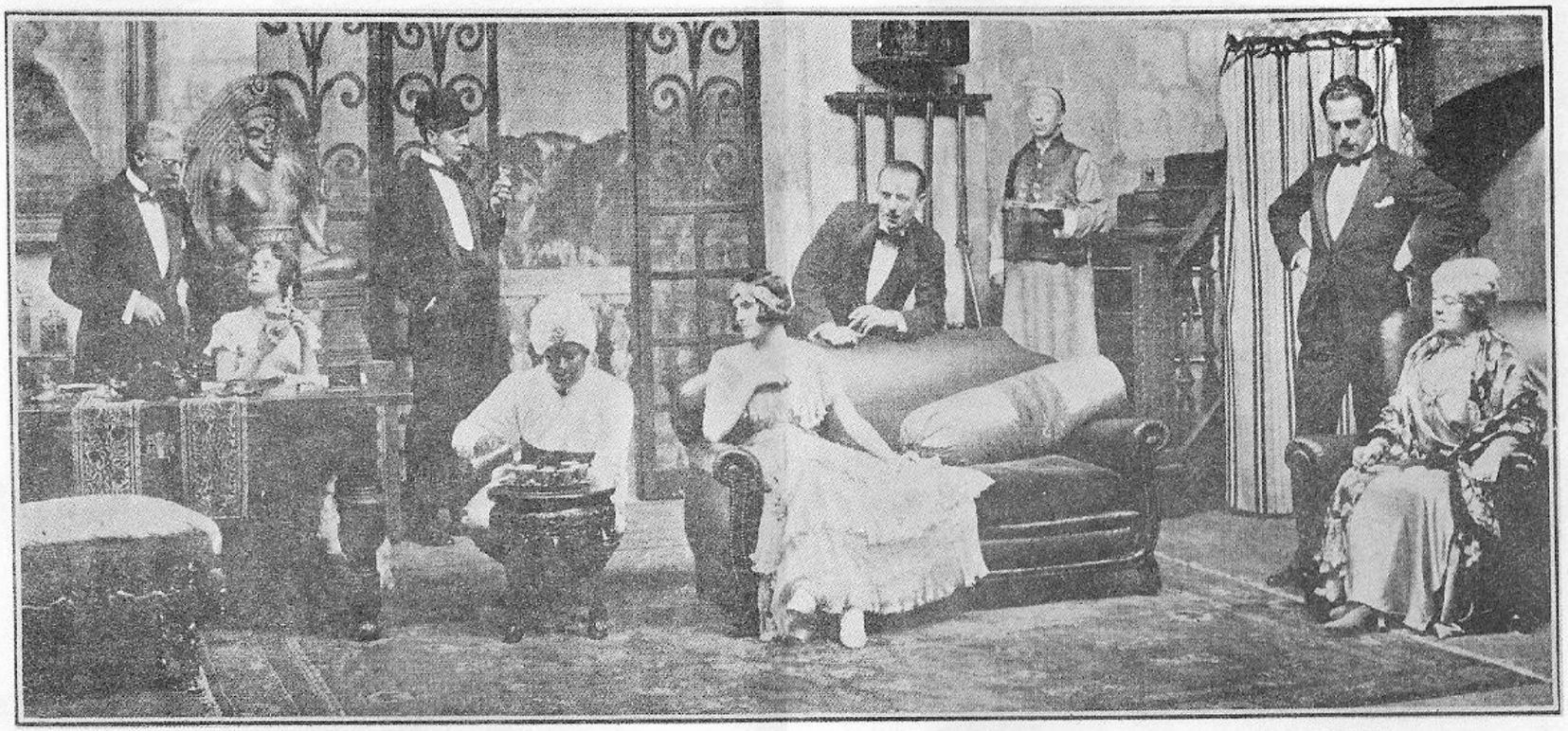
THE SECRET SERVICE MAN AND THE HIDDEN HAND

Stage Photo. Co.

THE TIBET MONK AND HILDA

SAX ROHMER'S MYSTERY PLAY

"THE EYE OF SIVA," AT THE NEW THEATRE



WHICH IS THE VILLAIN? THE MIXED COMPANY WHICH GATHERED IN THE COUNTRY HOUSE

The figures from left to right are: Norris Clay, an American Orientalist (Mr. Reginald Bach); Chris Haversham (Miss Kentish); Paul Harley, secret service agent, employed to solve the mystery (Mr. Wontner); the Indian butler (Mr. Malcolm Morley); Hilda Norbury (Miss Cathleen Nesbitt); Bill Haversham (Mr. Breon); Clay's Chinese servant (Mr. Forrester Harvey); Captain Barton (Mr. Warmington); and Mrs. Marsh, Clay's housekeeper (Miss Kate Phillips).

CAST

Paul Harley	Arthur Wontner	Inspector Wootton	D. A. Clarke-Smith
Norris Clay	Reginald Bach	Bird	Joseph Boddy
Captain Barton	S. J. Warmington	His Boy	Reginald Freeman
Bill Haversham	Edmond Breon	Mrs. Marsh	Kate Phillips
Rama Dass	Malcolm Morley	Chris Haversham	Agatha Kentish
Ah Fu	Forrester Harvey	Hilda Norbury	Cathleen Nesbitt

Produced by Benrimo

Opening night: 8 August 1923

[Photos reprinted from *The Graphic*, 8 September 1923]